

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 EB-11 AID-20 OMB-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /147 W

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R 291432Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5398

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0598

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MT

SUBJ: PROGRESS OF NEW NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY

REF: VALLETTA 0329

1. SUMMARY: DR. ANTHONY F. COLOMBO, ORGANIZER OF NEW NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, CALLED AT EMBASSY MARCH 28 TO DISCUSS PROGRESS OF HIS EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. COLOMBO CLAIMED THAT HE IS ABOUT TO OPEN A PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN VALLETTA, AND IN A MONTH OR SO HE WILL BEGIN PUBLISHING A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER. HE SAID HE NOW HAS NDP COMMITTEES IN EACH OF MALTA'S TEN ELECTORAL DISTRICTS. ASKED WHY, WEEKS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT OF PARTY FORMATION, NO NAMES OTHER THAN HIS OWN AND PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN HAVE BEEN REVEALED AS MEMBERS OR SUPPORTERS, COLOMBO SAID THAT AT PRESENT PARTY EXECUTIVE IS SELF-APPOINTED. NEXT STEP IS TO HAVE DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED EXECUTIVE (PRESUMABLY BY DISTRICT COMMITTEES) AND THEN NAMES WOULD ALL BECOME PUBLIC.

3. COLOMBO PROVIDED THREE OR FOUR NAMES, ONLY ONE OF WHICH IS FAMILIAR TO US-A MEDICAL DOCTOR ON GOZO WHO  
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IS KNOWN ONLY FOR HIS DEVOTION TO THE CAUSE OF A BRIDGE

BETWEEN THE TWO ISLANDS.

4. COLOMBO SAID THAT IN IDEOLOGY AND PLATFORM HE IS VERY CLOSE TO OPPOSITION NATIONALIST PARTY. HE CLAIMED THAT BEFORE ANNOUNCING NATIONALIST PARTY. HE CLAIMED THAT BEFORE ANNOUNCING CREATION OF NDP HE HAD GONE TO NATIONALIST LEADER BORG OLIVIER TO SAY THAT IF LATTER STEPPED DOWN AS NP LEADER, COLOMBO AND HIS FOLLOWERS WOULD JOIN NP. BORG OLIVIER REFUSED.

5. COLOMBO ASSERTED HE CAN GET UP TO EIGHT SEATS IN NEXT ELECTION. IF HE GETS ENOUGH, HE WOULD NOT ENTER COALITION WITH NP, BUT WOULD PROVIDE IT WITH WORKING MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT.

6. LABOR PARTY, ACCORDING TO COLOMBO HAS NOW LOST THE FLOATING VOTE AND MARGINAL SUPPORTERS WHO PROVIDED PRESENT SMALL MAJORITY. HE IS ASSURED BY HIS SUPPORTERS ON GOZO THAT MLP WILL NOT WIN SINGLE SEAT ON THAT ISLAND IN NEXT ELECTION.

7. COMMENT: SURPRISINGLY, COLOMBO DID NOT ASK FOR US FINANCIAL SUPPORT AS HE DID TO UK HIGH COMMISSIONER TEN DAYS AGO. HE TOLD HIGH COMMISSIONER THAT HE HAD FINANCIAL BACKING FROM CATHOLIC CHURCH, BUT IT WAS NOT SUFFICIENT. HE HAS PROBABLY ALSO SOUGHT ITALIAN ASSISTANCE, ALTHOUGH ITALIAN AMBASSADOR RETREATED IN CLOUD OF DUST WHEN WE ASKED HIM.

8. WE MAINTAIN OUR STRONG DOUBTS ABOUT VIABILITY OF COLOMBO'S PARTY. THERE IS NO PUBLIC EVIDENCE OF INTEREST, AND EVEN NON-PARTY MALTESE UNIFORMLY DOWNGRADE HIS PROSPECTS.GETZ

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